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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Consumer Advisory

Terry Goddard Issues Warning About Phony Food Service Letter

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Sept. 1, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today warned food service establishments to beware of a letter notifying them of “new health codes” and requiring them to purchase hand washing posters. The letter, sent by a company calling itself the Arizona Food Service Compliance Center (AFSCC), has been received by food service establishments in Arizona and other states. The Arizona Food Service Compliance Center is not affiliated with any state or federal agency.

The Attorney General’s Office obtained a copy of a letter from AFSCC claiming that state and federal food codes were recently amended to include a new “hand washing posting” requirement. The letter looks official and tells food service managers that the law requires that posters must be posted and must meet exact specifications and procedures.

“This is a scam circulating throughout the country,” Goddard said. “Neither Arizona nor the federal government has implemented a new hand washing posting requirement.”

The letter claims that “Any Food Service Establishment found to be in violation of State or Federal law by willfully failing to post approved hand washing posters may be subject to fines up to \$2,500 and suspension or revocation of license.” AFSCC promotes “Approved Hand Washing Posters” for \$19.95 plus shipping and encourages businesses to achieve compliance by ordering the “approved” posters.

Restaurants and food service establishments do not have to purchase a certain type of poster. The law requires a notice be posted to remind employees to wash their hands before handling food, but companies can create their own posters or request free ones from a county health department.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763; in Tucson at 520.628.6504; or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General’s Office has 25 satellite offices throughout the state with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov. Consumers can also file complaints online by visiting the Web site.

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